

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 2-9, 11-13, 15-22, 24, and 25 have been amended to improve antecedent basis. No new matter has been added.

The Office Action mailed May 14, 2004, has been received and reviewed. Claims 1-25 are currently pending in the application. Claims 1-25 stand rejected. Applicants have amended claims 2-9, 11-13, 15-22, 24, and 25 solely to improve grammar and to enhance antecedent basis without surrender of any prior claim scope, and respectfully request reconsideration of the application as amended herein.

Preliminary Amendment

Applicants' undersigned attorney notes the filing of a Preliminary Amendment on December 18, 2003, which filing was not acknowledged in the outstanding Office Action. Should the Preliminary Amendment have failed for some reason to have been entered in the Office file, Applicants' undersigned attorney will be happy to have a true copy thereof hand-delivered to the Examiner.

Double Patenting Rejection Based on U.S. Patent No. 6,416,601

Claims 1-25 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-21 of U.S. Patent No. 6,416,601. In order to avoid further expenses and time delay, Applicants elect to expedite the prosecution of the present application by filing a terminal disclaimer to obviate the double patenting rejections in compliance with 37 CFR § 1.321 (b) and (c). Applicants' filing of the terminal disclaimer should not be construed as acquiescence of the Examiner's double patenting or obviousness-type double patenting rejections. Attached is the terminal disclaimer and accompanying fee.

Double Patenting Rejection Based on U.S. Patent No. 6,610,156

Claims 1-25 stand rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-4 and 11-15 of U.S. Patent No. 6,610,156.

In order to avoid further expenses and time delay, Applicants elect to expedite the prosecution of the present application by filing a terminal disclaimer to obviate the double patenting rejections in compliance with 37 CFR § 1.321 (b) and (c). Applicants' filing of the terminal disclaimer should not be construed as acquiescence of the Examiner's double patenting or obviousness-type double patenting rejections. Attached is the terminal disclaimer and accompanying fee.

ENTRY OF AMENDMENTS

The amendments to claims 2-9, 11-13, 15-22, 24, and 25 above should be entered by the Examiner because the amendments are supported by the as-filed specification and drawings and do not add new matter to the application.

Claims 2-9, 11-13, 15-22, 24, and 25 were amended for reasons of improving antecedent basis and not for the purpose of narrowing the scope of the claims. As such, Applicants respectfully assert that no surrender or disclaimer of claim scope and, more specifically, of the broadest possible range of equivalents to which Applicants may be entitled has been effectuated.

CONCLUSION

Claims 1-25 are believed to be in condition for allowance, and an early notice thereof is respectfully solicited. Should the Examiner determine that additional issues remain which might be resolved by a telephone conference, she is respectfully invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



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